

## David Irving, at the Moment

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Although he himself has never undertaken research into the "Holocaust" of the Jews, the British historian David Irving is subject, intermittently, to promising bursts of revisionism. In 1988, at the second trial of Ernst Zündel in Toronto, he affirmed his high esteem for the "Leuchter Report", the study which concluded that the existence of homicidal gas chambers in the Auschwitz and Majdanek camps was a physical impossibility. Thereafter, however, recognising the damage done to his career as a historian by that burst of revisionism, he proceeded to keep a certain distance from the revisionists, while at the same time unloading some strange accusations upon Germany. But no matter! Today, the libel suit which he has brought in London against the Jewish-American historian Deborah Lipstadt compels him, representing himself, to put forth the revisionist case on the gas chambers in order to fight his own. The prestigious *Times* in its 12 January issue carried a piece by a reporter who, having attended the previous day's sessions of this trial expected to last three months, went so far as to write:

What is at stake here is not the *amour-propre* of individuals with grossly inflated egos. Rather it is whether one of the blackest chapters of 20th-century history actually happened, or is a figment of imaginative and politically motivated Jewry ("Academic buccaneer vs bookish schoolmaster", *Times*, 12 January 2000, p. 3).

On the 13th, the *Guardian* headlined the impossibility, according to D. Irving, of the Nazi gas chambers.

In France, on the 18th, *Libération* devoted nearly a full page to the subject and to D. Irving's trial. A sidebar dealt with "Le négationnisme et la loi en France" (Holocaust denial and the law in France).

Breaking with its policy of shrouding revisionism from the public eye, *Le Monde*, on the front page of its edition of 19 January 2000, has printed an article about the revisionist David Irving. In keeping with the newspaper's deep-seated dishonesty, this piece is oblique and malicious, lumps together disparate elements and repeats hearsay. But, as the careful reader will note, the article, by one Marc Roche, does let some information on the importance of the trial leak through.

Personally, I expect David Irving to make twists and turns and recantations. He writes and publishes too much in order to allow himself the time, beforehand, to read attentively the documents which he quotes or which the opposing side submits. If he is acquainted with the revisionist literature, it is only just barely; he cannot be considered a spokesman for historical revisionism. I have always called him "the reluctant revisionist". Strong in appearance, he is, in reality, fragile. His opponents will have an easy time tripping him up. If one day he wins his case, at first instance or on appeal, it will certainly not be on the strength of his knowledge of the "Holocaust".

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